(c) the present status of production of crude oil within the country and of imports, with the annual foreign exchange outgo thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Given the increasing demand for petroleum products and the current level of import dependence, it is difficult to envisage self-sufficiency in the near future. However, several important steps have been taken to increase oil and gas production, which include the following:

(i) to improve the recovery factor from existing major fields by implementing Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR)/lmproved Oil Recovery (IOR) schemes; in particular Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has taken up 15 fields for this purpose at an estimated investment of Rs. 10,000 crore, which would also help in accelerating oil production from these fields.

(ii) to increase exploration efforts through the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP); Under the three rounds of NELP, Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) have been signed for 70 blocks.

(iii) to explore in new areas, especially in deep water and difficult frontier areas, as also explore in the deeper layers of the producing fields.

(iv) to develop faster the newly discovered fields and to step up the use of new technologies for seismic surveys, work over, stimulation operations, drilling of wells etc. in producing areas.

(v) to acquire acreages abroad.

(c) The indigenous crude oil production during 2002-03 was 33.08 million metric tonne (MMT) and the crude oil import was about 82 MMT at a total value of Rs. 76,195 crore (US $ 15,759 million).

Petrol Pumps in Uttaranchal

†2959. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of petrol pumps functioning in Uttaranchal;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether these petrol pumps are sufficient to meet the present requirement of transport in Uttaranchal; and

(c) if not, the number of petrol pumps required in this State and by when the remaining petrol pumps shall be set-up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) As on 1-4-2003, there were 218 retail outlets dealerships (petrol pumps) in operation in the State of Uttaranchal.

(b) and (c) The Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) conduct surveys in various parts of the country, including in the State of Uttaranchal, to identify locations where economically viable retail outlet dealerships can be set up. While doing so, the requirement of the tr?nsportation fuels at the location surveyed is taken into account.

After the dismantling of the Administered Pricing Mechanism in the petroleum sector with effect from 1 -4-2002, the public sector OMCs have freedom to set up retail outlet dealerships as per the requirements and commercial viability.

Compulsory sale of Gasohol

2960. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several sugarcane-producing States were slow on creating infrastructure for producing ethanol by forcing the Central Government to extend the deadline for the compulsory sale of gasohol for another three months; and

(b) if so, what is Government's response thereto and the steps taken or proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government held review meetings with State Governments/oil companies and in order to facilitate completion of setting up of anhydrous ethanol manufacturing capacities, extended the deadline for covering all the areas of the notified 9 States and 4 Union Territories from 30-6-2003 to 30-9-2003. State Governments have also been requested